

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SHB 1414

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As Reported by Senate Committee On:  
Health & Long-Term Care, March 16, 2009

**Title:** An act relating to the practice of health care assistants.

**Brief Description:** Concerning health care assistants.

**Sponsors:** House Committee on Health Care & Wellness (originally sponsored by Representatives Driscoll, Moeller, Hinkle, Cody, Sullivan, Nelson and Ormsby).

**Brief History:** Passed House: 3/05/09, 97-0.

**Committee Activity:** Health & Long-Term Care: 3/16/09 [DP].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH & LONG-TERM CARE

**Majority Report:** Do pass.

Signed by Senators Keiser, Chair; Franklin, Vice Chair; Pflug, Ranking Minority Member; Becker, Fairley, Murray and Parlette.

**Staff:** Edith Rice (786-7444)

**Background:** Health care assistants are certified persons who assist licensed health care practitioners such as physicians and physician assistants, registered nurses, advanced registered nurse practitioners, and naturopaths. A licensed health care practitioner may delegate certain functions within the delegator's scope of practice to a health care assistant including administering skin tests and injections, performing blood withdrawal, and certain other specified functions.

Health care assistants are certified by the health care facility in which the services are performed or by the health care practitioner who delegates functions to the health care assistant. The facility or practitioner must submit to the Department of Health (DOH) a roster of certified health care assistants. The submittal must include a list of specific medications and diagnostic agents, and the route of administration of each.

**Summary of Bill:** Qualified health care assistants are granted limited authority to administer certain drugs. The administration of drugs by a health care assistant is restricted to oral, topical, rectal, otic, ophthalmic, or inhaled routes administered pursuant to a written order of a supervising health care practitioner.

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Health care assistants may be authorized to administer only specifically-named drugs while a patient is in the care of a health care practitioner.

Health care assistants authorized to administer the specified over-the-counter and legend drugs must demonstrate initial and ongoing competency to administer specific drugs as determined by the health care practitioner.

The operative provisions that permit health care assistants the limited authority to administer certain drugs expire on July 1, 2013.

The DOH must conduct a review regarding the regulation and the scope of the practice of medical assistants.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Committee/Commission/Task Force Created:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:** PRO: Health care assistants are being used in health care settings more frequently. This bill expands their scope of practice. There should be a sunset review of the medical assistant profession. The clinics have asked for this bill and the language is agreed upon with the Nurses Association. Nurses support the bill and believe it will improve patient care in clinics and doctor's offices.

**Persons Testifying:** PRO: Representative Driscoll, prime sponsor; Carl Nelson, Washington State Medical Association; Claire Glover, The Everett Clinic.